

to make his service in this Congress as positive as it possibly can be. I am very sorry that we have come to this point.

I tried in what we did in our committee with Majority Leader ARMEY and Speaker HASTERT to come to a bipartisan agreement on who the Chaplain would be. I had concerns when the process was announced that it would be maybe difficult to get to a bipartisan selection, but I hoped we could do that.

We have a different view of the facts of what happened in the meetings, but that is not important. When we finally got to the point where there was not complete agreement between all three of us, I asked to come back to the bipartisan committee so that both the Speaker and Dr. Wright knew exactly the feelings of the members of our committee. And I tried in the best way that I could to get those feelings across.

I have never said and never believed that there was bias of any kind in the making of this selection. And I have never said that.

I do believe that in the future, as the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) has just said, we can find a process that will ensure bipartisanship in the selection of this important office. I will certainly work toward that end.

I respect the Speaker's choice, and for my part and our part we will do everything in our power to welcome this new Chaplain and to make his service here a positive force for every Member of this body.

The SPEAKER. For what purpose does the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KLECZKA) rise?

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, since I was the one who asked Father Tim O'Brien to seek the chaplaincy, I would ask the courtesy of 2 or 3 minutes to make a few comments.

The SPEAKER. We will give the gentleman the courtesy of 2 to 3 minutes, but first let us have the courtesy of swearing in the Chaplain.

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APPOINTMENT AS CHAPLAIN OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to 2 U.S. Code, 75a-1, the Chair appoints Father Daniel Coughlin of Illinois to act as and to exercise temporarily the duties of Chaplain of the House of Representatives.

Will Father Coughlin please come forward and take the oath of office.

Father Daniel Coughlin appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you will take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter. So help you God.

□ 1645

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Before we return to the Committee of the Whole, the Chair intends to recognize the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KLECZKA) for 5 minutes and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY) for 5 minutes.

Without objection, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KLECZKA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

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COMMENTS ON FATHER TIM O'BRIEN

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I join with all of you in welcoming our new Chaplain, Father Coughlin, to the House of Representatives.

What I would like to do is spend a few moments not reopening the wounds of this, what I would term a sorry chapter in the House of Representatives, but I take the floor today to defend a family friend, a person who I asked to think about running for the post of Chaplain of the House of Representatives, Father Tim O'Brien, who I have known for over 30 years.

Father Tim O'Brien comes from the State of Wisconsin, born on a family dairy farm in Eden, Wisconsin. His ordination was from St. Francis Seminary in my district in Milwaukee. He was an associate pastor in a parish in my district. He went on to complete his education and received a doctorate, and he is a professor at Marquette University.

Because of his love of politics and this House and teaching young minds, he started on his own the Les Aspin Institute named after our former colleague Les Aspin. His intention in starting this program was to bring students from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, here to Washington, DC, to work in our offices, to work for the agencies, to possibly work for some lobby firms, to get a hands-on feel for what the government is all about, so when they graduate and start their livelihood, in no matter what job it might be, they will understand what goes on here, and hopefully they will be a better citizen, hopefully they will be a better voter, or a voter, and possibly they might run for office.

Mr. Speaker, one of those interns who was in my office who has graduated from Marquette was the first Hispanic elected to the State legislature in Wisconsin who hales from my district. So I think the program is working.

So I said to Father O'Brien, "Because of your love of the institution and government, consider becoming our Chaplain," and he did. He put his nomination and his application in, and in every step of the process he came out on top.

Oh, I tracked this process like a hawk. I talked to every member of that

screening committee. How did Father O'Brien do? And you know what I heard repeatedly, time after time? Home run. A triple. Best of the lot. And, in the final analysis, he was the top pick of the committee.

Now, was that related to the leaders who made the choice of someone other than him? Yes. The gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) admitted that even though the formal paper did not have the ranking, he verbalized it, and so did the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY). So to say that we did not know who was the top candidate is not accurate.

One of the Republican leaders said, My gosh, I did not know the denominations of the candidates. That is not accurate. I personally talked to that leader on at least two occasions on the floor. I am just so hesitant to go and try to correct all the misstatements, because I think that opens up the issue again.

I want closure, like you. But here we have this Catholic priest, who just thought he would like to be the Chaplain. He thought he could do well for all of us in the House. And, since that time, he has been greatly maligned.

In Roll Call last week we read, Well, he does not have enough counseling experience. Well, he can weather that, because we all know as a colonel in the Army Reserves he counsels enlisted and officers every day he is on duty. As a faculty member, he counsels students and other faculty. He has counseled me and continues to do so. So it is not the idea of counseling.

But to go after this Catholic priest, who did nothing but want to be the Chaplain. There were rumors leaked, and I cannot point fingers because I do not know where they came from, that his home in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, was purchased with some Federal funds. Naturally, the reporters descend on the poor guy like locusts. Is that true? Is it true? Is that true? Actually, it was not true.

He absconded with some money from a drug and alcohol program, one which he has never run, and the reporters again called him and descended. Is it true?

It is not, because I never was involved in such a program. I never got any funding. So I know full well that throughout the process this individual and his reputation have suffered also.

So, today, Mr. Speaker, we close the book on this sad chapter. But I ask my Republican colleagues not to rewrite history, because that we should not do. But I think there are some in this body that owe Father Tim O'Brien an apology. As we go on from today, I think I can be confident that not only Father Tim O'Brien has been vindicated, but a lot of us, with the appointment of our new Chaplain.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.